

# ICE San Antonio office deports man wanted for fraud in Mexico

SAN ANTONIO — A Mexican national, who is wanted for defrauding hundreds of Mexican citizens of their total earnings, was deported and turned over to Mexican law enforcement authorities Thursday by officers with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).

Ernesto Karam-Garcia, 45, entered the United States with an Investor Visa in August 2011. On Nov. 29, 2011, Mexico's 39th District federal court issued an arrest warrant for Karam-Garcia charging him with fraud. Karam-Garcia was arrested Aug. 21 at his San Antonio residence by the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) Long Star Fugitive Task. After his arrest he was turned over to ICE, where he remained in custody until his removal Nov. 21.

According to Mexico's Procuraduría General de la República (PGR), Karam-Garcia and two other associates allegedly defrauded several hundred Mexican citizens of their earnings, totaling more than \$150 million in U.S. currency. ICE officers worked with Mexican authorities to identify that Karam-Garcia was wanted for fraud in Mexico. The PGR assisted ICE by providing copies of the warrant and helped coordinate the removal at the U.S./Mexico International Border at Laredo, Texas.

"This individual thought he could evade justice in Mexico by hiding in the United States," said Enrique M. Lucero, field office director for ERO San Antonio. "As this case makes clear, ICE works closely with law enforcement agencies here and abroad to ensure convicted criminals are returned to their home countries in order to be held accountable for their actions."

"This was a proud day not only for the law enforcement agencies involved in the apprehension and deportation of Karam-Garcia, but most importantly for the victims who suffered economically and sought justice," said U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Texas Robert R. Almonte.

This removal is a result of the expanded binational cooperation to identify arrest and repatriate Mexican fugitives who have fled to the United States to avoid prosecution. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Mexico works closely with the Mexican government as part of this effort. Many of the captured fugitives are charged with homicide or other violent crimes in Mexico.

Since Oct. 1, 2009, ERO has removed more than 645 foreign fugitives from the United States who were wanted in their native countries for serious crimes, including kidnapping, rape and murder. ERO works with the HSI Office of International Affairs, foreign consular offices in the United States and Interpol to identify foreign fugitives illegally present in the country.

ERO is focused on smart, effective immigration enforcement that targets serious criminal aliens who present the greatest risk to the security of our communities, such as those charged with or convicted of homicide, rape, robbery, kidnapping, major drug offenses and threats to national security. ERO also prioritizes the arrest and removal of those who game the immigration system, including immigration fugitives or those criminal aliens who have been previously deported and illegally re-entered the country.

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